



**REQUEST 18835**

Please can you provide the following information regarding your council's policies and practices on disability equality (as defined by the Equality Act 2010):

<b>REQUEST 18835</b>	<b>RESPONSE</b>
<p>1. Disability employment schemes provide essential support for disabled people to find and maintain employment. Is your council signed up to one or more disability employment schemes, such as Disability Confident?</p> <p>a. Yes - Please provide details about each scheme that you are signed up to.</p> <p>b. No</p>	<p>1.</p> <p>a. Yes. We are currently a Disability Confident Leader Level 3 accredited.</p> <p>Also signed up to the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter.</p>
<p>2. Please provide a copy of your policy and procedures in place that outline the council's approach to the identification and implementation of reasonable adjustments for disabled employees in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.</p>	<p>2. Please see a variety of documents attached:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adjustments Hub Page (Guidance)</li><li>• Supporting Attendance Policy</li><li>• Manager guidelines on supporting employees with disabilities.</li><li>• ADHD Guidance</li><li>• Autism Guidance</li><li>• Dyscalculia Guidance</li><li>• Dysgraphia Guidance</li><li>• Dyslexia Guidance</li><li>• Dyspraxia Guidance</li><li>• Hearing Loss &amp; Deafness Guidance</li><li>• Sight Loss Guidance</li><li>• Stammering Guidance</li><li>• Tourette Syndrome Guidance</li></ul>
<p>3. Does your council provide training or education for managers and employees relating to disability awareness and about the process for the implementation of reasonable adjustments for the council's disabled employees in accordance with the Equality Act 2010?</p>	<p>3.</p> <p>a. Yes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inclusive recruitment eLearning module</li><li>• Disability awareness eLearning module</li><li>• Awareness of disability and autism eLearning module</li></ul>

- a. Yes - Please provide details or any documents that you provide to managers and employees.
- b. No

  

4. Do your procurement policies require private contracts to demonstrate a commitment to promote disability equality and provide regular reports on how they are achieving this? If yes – do you also ask which disability employment schemes they have signed up to?
  - Introduction to EDI eLearning module
  - Supporting Attendance Workshops for new and existing managers. These are held quarterly.
  - Neurodiversity training held for HR&OD and Legal employees on the 19/03/25.
  - Reasonable adjustments learning hours held for HR&OD staff on 29/04/25 and 08/05/25.
4. We do not include a clause in our policies asking bidders to demonstrate a commitment to promoting disability equality. We do however, ask that the successful bidder adheres to the Council's Equality & Diversity Policy ([Equality and Diversity](#)).

To add, we are currently looking at contractual requirements to be procured that could include for the opportunity of access audits to be conducted.

## **Types of reasonable adjustments to support us in work**

### **Adjustments**

The Equality Act places a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments for workers who meet the definition of disabled in line with the Equality Act 2010 (hereafter referred to as “the Act”) to ensure they are not substantially disadvantaged when they are doing their jobs.

The Act defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on an individual’s ability to do normal daily activities. A physical or mental impairment is considered to be long term if it is likely to last for 12 months or more.

Employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that a disabled person has the same access to everything that is involved in securing and doing a job as a non-disabled person. Managers are legally required to make reasonable adjustments where they are aware, or should reasonably be aware, that an employee or applicant has a disability. However, in Wigan as part of our Supporting Attendance policy, we encourage all managers to consider how reasonable adjustments may be applied to any employee to help them to keep well at work, regardless of whether they would be considered a disabled person for the purposes of the Act.

Managers must consider whether an individual’s condition is covered under the Equality Act. It is important that employees who have a disability are supported, and that the council considers reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

The Act provides protection from discrimination to a wide range of individuals, including job applicants, employees and workers, and contractors or some self-employed people, particularly those who are contracted to personally perform work.

Failure to comply with the provisions of the Act can result in claims being brought before an Employment Tribunal. If a discrimination claim is successful, the compensation awarded is uncapped, meaning there is no upper limit. Awards typically include compensation for financial loss and injury to feelings.

Employers have a legal obligation to provide reasonable adjustments when they know, or could reasonably be expected to know, that an individual is disabled.

An example of reasonably being expected to know could be when an employee begins to struggle with manual tasks due to ongoing breathing difficulties, particularly if these difficulties persist for 12 months or more. In such cases, it is appropriate and expected for the manager to investigate the situation to determine whether reasonable adjustments are required.

Furthermore, it is important to recognise that everyone is different, so managers must ensure that a person-centred approach is always taken when exploring reasonable adjustments.

There may also be occasions when a person has a disability but does not require or want any reasonable adjustments.

Factors that need to be taken into consideration when deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable can include but are not limited to:

- The extent to which the alteration will improve the situation for the individual
- How easy it is to make the change
- The cost of the change, financially and practically. When assessing practicality managers would look at cost in terms of disruption caused to others
- Health and safety implications
- The impact of the change on the rest of the team
- The resources of the employer. The council, as a large employer, has a greater responsibility to take positive and proactive steps to remove, reduce or prevent any obstacles that a disabled worker or job applicant may face. All decisions on what is reasonable will be made on a case-by-case basis.
- What an individual feels they can do and can't do, what would help and why this would help
- What we can do to remove barriers, prevent/reduce absence or enable a return to work
- Whether this is needed as a temporary or permanent arrangement
- Consider if Occupational Health advice may help. Occupational Health can provide recommendations about the type of adjustments that could offer support.

### **Reasonable Adjustments**

If a proposed adjustment is reasonable depends on the context of each situation, as what works in one service and for one person, such as being able to take regular breaks away from a computer, may not be reasonable or possible for all employees within the council.

Managers must consider if any proposed adjustments will be effective in removing and/or reducing any disadvantage faced by the employee and must be devised in consultation with them. They should also consider how practical, affordable, what level of disruption would implementing the adjustment cause, what resources the

adjustment would require alongside the impact the adjustment may have on the health and safety of the disabled worker as well as other colleagues and any other relevant individuals.

As an organisation, we take advice from our Occupational Health provider, Innovate, in respect of reasonable adjustments. However, while they may make recommendations, the duty to make reasonable adjustments remains with the Council as an employer. The decision in relation to what adjustments are implemented is made by the manager, taking into account service needs.

### **Examples of reasonable adjustments**

Managers should consider any reasonable workplace adaptions which may help a new or current employee to carry out their duties. They must carry out a risk assessment of the employee's work area, identify any reasonable adjustments that could be considered and discuss these with the employee to ensure the changes would be effective. Managers should meet with the employee after an agreed period of time to discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of the adjustments. Examples of workplace adaptions include:

- A ground floor workstation for an individual who has problems going up and down stairs (where a lift is not available)
- Arranging a parking space near the entrance to the workplace, if someone has reduced mobility
- Providing a special chair or keyboard, voice automated software, dictaphones, workstations, headphones or loop/communication aids
- Providing an automated standing desk or specialised office chair.

### **Flexible Working**

There are a range of methods in which to apply flexibility, such as

- Temporary or permanent change of contractual hours
- Altering start and finish times
- Break periods or flexible working patterns
- Working longer/shorter days.

It is important to consider that changes to working patterns and subsequently hours worked on a temporary or permanent basis will impact on an employee's pay and contractual benefits including annual leave. These potential impacts should be discussed and considered before any agreement made.

Where service needs and requirements allow, working from home is another way to apply flexibility. This could be for a greater number of days per week for an agreed period of time, or in some instances an introduction to working from home. Please take advice from a member of the HR Operations team on implementing this adjustment.

Furthermore, flexibility could be granted by providing flexible rest breaks. Managers could agree to an employee having flexible rest breaks if it assists them to manage their health condition(s). An example of this in practice is an employee diagnosed with diabetes may need to eat at set times in order to manage their blood sugar levels.

## **Access to work**

In certain circumstances it may be possible to obtain funding towards workplace adaptations through the [Access to Work Scheme \(external link\)](#) a government grant that supports disabled people start or stay in work.

If the employee has been working for us for more than 6 weeks when they apply for Access to Work, we may need to share the cost of any support provided. So having an early conversation with potential or new employees will help us to reduce costs, it is also advantageous for the employee to have necessary support in place as early as possible.

Applications for funding must be done by the employee themselves with the support of their work coach and manager. If a potential or new employee has received Access to Work funding previously any support/equipment provided can be transferred into their new role where needed.

The [Access to Work factsheet \(external link\)](#) for employers provides more information.

In addition, Able Futures provides a wide range of mental health support services delivered by qualified health care professionals. The service is confidential, fast and flexible and is available over the phone and through email and will be completely anonymous.

Able Futures will provide 9 months of mental health support from a qualified professional who will act as a 'Mental Health Life Coach', or 'Project Manager' to better mental wellbeing. It is an early intervention service and not designed for those who require crisis support. For more information, contact Able Futures.

## **Disability Leave**

Disability leave is distinct from sick leave and annual leave and is time when an employee is well but absent from work for a disability related reason. It allows an employee who is covered by the Equality Act to have reasonable time off during work

hours for rehabilitation, assessment, and treatment. Examples of rehabilitation and assessment are as follows:

- Annual check ups and hospital appointments that occur during work hours;
- Surgery or treatment, for example chemotherapy, physiotherapy, or counselling;
- Reasonable recovery from treatment
- Specific rehabilitation activities such as dog training or sign language training. This may be appropriate when an employee needs time to adjust to changes in their personal and professional life caused by a new or existing disability.

This type of leave is not sickness absence and should not be treated as such. Employees with a disability may apply to their manager for disability leave and managers will consider each case on an individual basis. This leave will be paid at basic salary.

For disability leave to operate successfully, it is important that both the manager and the employee keep each other up to date with progress at key stages and that it is recorded on iTrent and monitored. Disability leave will not be included in any sickness absence reporting figures and will be kept separate. Employees will be asked to provide evidence to support their request for leave.

### **Amended duties**

Where an employee has difficulty carrying out minor duties, the manager may consider allocating one or more of these to another employee. This may be done temporarily or permanently when it is reasonable to do so. For example, removing heavy lifting from the job of a person with a bad back or removing duties that are considered too pressurised from the job of a person who has been off with stress. Alternatively, the employee may be given other tasks to replace those which have been removed.

Managers must consult with employees if tasks are to be exchanged or new ways of working introduced.

If an employee is temporarily unable to do their own role and it is impossible to amend the duties of their role, the manager should assess if amended duties can be found elsewhere within the department. If this can be accommodated, the employee can be temporarily transferred to the alternative post, but the following protocols will apply:

- The employee must be able to work their full contracted hours;
- The employee will be paid the appropriate rate of pay for their substantive post;
- The maximum time period that will be allowed for amended duties will be two months, or for the period stated on the fit note if this is less.

Amended duties can be extended to three months if supported by occupational health.

## **Phased return to work**

A phased return to work following a long period of sickness absence allows an employee to gradually increase their work duties or working hours. Managers will need to consider what a reasonable arrangement is in consultation with the employee.

The phased return to work will be for a maximum of four weeks on basic pay and from the fifth week the employee will be expected to work their full contracted hours.

If the employee feels they are not ready to return to their full duties or hours, they will need to discuss this with their line manager. The manager would then consider if they could allow the employee to use one or more of the following options to delay their return to full contractual hours:

- Annual leave
- Flexi time
- Time off in lieu
- Where appropriate, unpaid leave

This would be for an agreed period of time.

If the employee is not able to use the above options, they can request to temporarily reduce their contractual hours for a set period of time. Again, the manager would have to agree to the request and there will be adjustments pro rata to pay and contractual benefits.

## **Medical redeployment**

When an employee gains recommendation for redeployment on medical grounds from Occupational Health, the employee's line manager will meet with the employee to seek their agreement on this recommendation. The period in which an employee is to be considered for medical redeployment is 6-12 weeks.

The process for medical redeployment is as follows:

- The employee will identify suitable vacancies via Wigan Council's internal vacancies website and greater.jobs. The manager should share both of these website links with the employee. Only jobs that are an equivalent grade, or one above or below to the employee's substantive role will be eligible to be applied for under the redeployment process
- Following applying for a job, the employee will need to contact Job Adverts providing their full name and job title they have applied for, and stipulate they are applying under the redeployment process

- Once the Resourcing Team has been notified of the redeployee's email, they will advise the appropriate hiring manager that you must be considered as a priority candidate
- The Resourcing Team will inform HR Employment Services that the redeployee has applied for a role(s) and if successful.

**In cases of medical redeployment, the employee's existing post cannot be filled on a permanent basis until the employee is appointed in their new post following a trial period.**

### **Training**

Managers must provide training for disabled employees to use workplace adaptions or specialist equipment. With the employee's agreement, managers should also provide disability training for staff in their team. Further advice is available from the Organisational Development (OD) team.

To ensure that disabled employees have access to any relevant training opportunities, managers must consider whether reasonable adjustments are needed. These may include:

- training being provided over a longer period of time for an employee who can only attend a course for a limited number of hours per day
- training material being provided in different formats
- sign language interpreters being available or allowing trainees to bring a personal assistant on a course; and
- alternative premises being used for training.

If appropriate the manager should discuss this with the OD team.

### **Providing a reader or a sign language interpreter**

Managers may need to allow a support worker to work with a disabled employee. Support workers are employed to provide individual, specific, work related support to a disabled employee which may be needed all the time or for some of the time.

This could include a reader or signer for example reading information to a visually impaired person at particular times during the working day. The Access to Work Scheme can usually help with the cost of this support.

### **Providing supervision**

Managers should consider whether it is appropriate to provide extra supervision or support to a disabled employee. This will be particularly beneficial if someone has a learning disability.

### **Mentoring**

In consultation with the disabled employee, managers could consider providing a mentor or buddy. This would enable the employee to work alongside the mentor or buddy whilst learning the job and would mean they would have someone to speak to if a problem occurs.

This type of support could help to build the employee's confidence and identify any training needs. The support should be reviewed on a regular basis and withdrawn when the employee feels it is no longer required.

### **Modifying procedures**

It is appropriate that a manager considers what procedures need to be modified. The following are some examples of procedures that may need modifying:

Testing or assessment – managers should modify procedures for assessments and provide additional training as appropriate. Candidates can give their answers using alternative methods or have additional time to complete assessments or tests.

Providing information in alternative formats - managers should provide instructions, reference manuals, application forms or information in alternative formats.

Induction – managers will have to make adjustments to the induction procedure so that the employee is introduced into their new working environment in a clearly structured and supported way. If necessary, an individually tailored programme could be devised.

Health and safety – dependent on the nature of the disability, managers may need to discuss a personal evacuation plan with a disabled employee in case of fire and ensure full support is given in such an event.

### **Manager top tip**

Think about what can help the individual and consider any impact the adjustment could have on others including colleagues or the people we work with.

Seek advice from your HR representative who can advise on reasonable adjustments and whether Occupational Health advice should be explored. Document any agreements and when these will be reviewed. You can do this as part of a Wellbeing Check In or, if one is in place at this stage, a Supporting Attendance Plan.

We want to ensure that we get the best from our employees and supporting staff in the workplace with appropriate reasonable adjustments where needed will help to do this.





**Wigan**   
**Council**

# Supporting Attendance Policy

Author: Human Resources & Organisational Development

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> June 2024 – Version: 1.5

# Contents

Supporting Attendance Policy	1
Introduction	3
Who does this Policy Apply to?	3
What are the benefits of this Policy?	3
Key Principles	3
How will we do it?	3
The Equality Act	4
Responsibilities	4
Employees	4
Managers	5
HR & OD	5
Trade Unions	6
Procedure	6
Wellbeing Check In	6
Supporting Attendance Plan	6
Plan Review Meeting	7
Plan Outcomes	7
Appeals	7

## Introduction

Creating a happy, healthy, and productive workforce is a key priority for all of us. We have a joint commitment to care for our health and wellbeing. This policy focuses on a holistic approach to managing attendance. We recognise that individuals need the right support at the right time to stay happy and healthy in work. We also recognise that individuals may in some cases need time off work, for example to recover from illness or for a different reason which is having a significant impact on their health and wellbeing. We aim to achieve a better balance for teams and organisations through:

- Asset based conversations to support and explore alternatives.
- A range of health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Early intervention and prevention.
- Effective management.
- Accountability.

## Who does this Policy Apply to?

The Supporting Attendance policy applies to all council employees and employees in schools whose Governing Body have formally adopted the Supporting Attendance policy. This policy does not apply to agency workers. As part of our pledge to support the Trade Union Congress' (TUC) Dying to Work Charter, we have developed separate guidance to support employees who have been diagnosed with a terminal illness. Further information can be accessed on The Hub.

## What are the benefits of this Policy?

- Improved support for employees.
- Increased engagement levels.
- Cost reductions.
- Improved service delivery.
- Improved outcomes for employees.

## Key Principles

### How will we do it?

We recognise that each case will be different, so we have designed a range of tools to support managers and staff through the process. Whilst the

action taken will depend on the circumstances, we will ensure that we follow three key principles in all cases, whilst also considering the impact on employees, colleagues, and our organisation:

Care	Consult	Consider
Take an asset-based approach	The individual	Absence reason and history
Treat people as individuals	GP / specialists (if needed)	Medical advice/ upcoming medical appointments
Listen, explore options and alternatives	Occupational Health (if needed)	The prognosis and individual's wishes
Help and support	HR & OD services & Trade Unions	Reasonable adjustments/ realistic alternatives

When attendance levels become a concern, for example they are having a detrimental impact on others, teams, services and customers and a formal Supporting Attendance plan has not achieved a return to work or improvement, we will explore the most appropriate resolution which, in some cases, may result in a termination of employment.

## The Equality Act

We have a responsibility as an employer not to discriminate against employees who have a disability. The above principles underpin our legal duty to consider and make adjustments which are 'reasonable' in the individual circumstance of an employee with a disability. 'Reasonable' will consider factors such as cost, practicability, and resources available to employers. We recognise our employees as individuals and embrace our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion. We will go beyond the legal requirements and explore adjustments and alternatives for all employees who need help and support based on their individual circumstances.

## Responsibilities

### Employees

- Recognise the importance of regular attendance and to be open, honest, and accountable.

- Care for your own health and well-being and to ask for help and support when needed.
- Inform your manager as soon as possible if you are unable to fulfil your duties.
- Be open to suggestions, alternative arrangements, or other potential options.
- Be aware of and access appropriate health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Provide appropriate medical evidence as required, a Fit Note is required for absence of more than seven consecutive days.
- Update your sickness absence record on My Job with an end date on your return to work.

## Managers

- Create a working environment that maximises attendance and engagement.
- Take an asset-based approach to support good attendance levels, discuss realistic alternatives/amendments, and support plans for employees.
- Hold regular My Time meetings with employees.
- To be aware of and promote health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Manage issues and take appropriate action, including formal action where necessary.
- Create and maintain accurate iTrent records for all employees for all occasions of absence.

## HR & OD

- Provide advice and guidance to managers and employees on the application of policy, including supportive options and appropriate action.
- Provide tools and training for managers.
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and seek regular feedback from all employees.
- Consult with trade union colleagues on the policy and take a partnership approach to support attendance.

## Trade Unions

- Provide advice, information, guidance, and support to members.
- Provide feedback on the effectiveness of the policy.
- Work in partnership to explore options, support, and solutions for members.

## Procedure

### Wellbeing Check In

A focused conversation on early intervention and prevention to support an employee's wellbeing and attendance. A wellbeing check can be held to support an employee in work and prevent absence, to support a return to work (keep in touch) or on a return to work (welcome back). This should be at a private space either at a school building, off site, virtually or at an employee's home if they prefer. A wellbeing check is an informal meeting aimed at supporting an employee at an early stage. The discussions held as part of the wellbeing check-in(s) will help to make informed decisions on when to manage attendance formally through a Supporting Attendance Plan. For example, if the support through wellbeing check-in(s) has not had the desired impact on attendance a Supporting Attendance Plan meeting should be convened.

### Supporting Attendance Plan

A plan to agree the employee's return to work or improvement in attendance when wellbeing check-ins have already taken place, or the employee is not engaging in the process. A plan can be arranged when a return to work or improvement has not been reached despite support offered/provided as part of the wellbeing check in meetings. The meeting should be held in a private space at a school building, off site, virtually or at an employee's home if they prefer. Employees can be accompanied by a work colleague or a recognised Trade Union representative if they wish. HR may also be present to support with complex cases.

If you are unable to agree the aims of the supporting attendance plan at the meeting, you may choose to hold a follow up meeting. The purpose of the follow up meeting would be to finalise the plan.

If the plan is not achieved, i.e., the employee has not been able to return to work or sustain improved attendance, a supporting attendance plan review meeting should be convened.

## Plan Review Meeting

The purpose of the supporting attendance plan review meeting is for managers and employees to explore the reasons why the plan has not been achieved, consider any change in circumstances, and discuss any adjustments and / or further support. The meeting should be held in a private space at a school building, off site, virtually or at an employee's home if they prefer. Employees can be accompanied by a work colleague or a recognised Trade Union representative if they wish. HR may also be present to support with complex cases.

## Plan Outcomes

- **Plan achieved** – The plan will be closed, and the employee's attendance monitored for twelve months.
- **Plan not achieved** – Options may include, if not already explored, ill health retirement, medical redeployment or other mutually agreed exit options. Where these are not available or appropriate, an attendance hearing will be arranged.
- For further information relating to supporting attendance meetings, please see the "Supporting Attendance Process" document.

## Appeals

An employee has the right to appeal if they are dismissed. Appeals should be made within ten working days of receiving the letter confirming the outcome of the attendance hearing. Appeals will be managed in line with the Council's Appeals Procedure.



# Manager Guidelines on Supporting Employees with Disabilities

This document should be read in conjunction with the Adjustments section of the Supporting Attendance Toolkit on the Hub.

## Introduction

Wigan Council prides itself on being an equal opportunities employer and is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all employees and removing barriers which could disadvantage disabled employees.

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The protected characteristics the Act covers are as follows:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Gender reassignment.
- Marriage and civil partnerships.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race, including ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality.
- Religion or belief, including lack of belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

The Act provides protection from discrimination to a wide range of individuals, including job applicants, employees and workers, and contractors or some self-employed people, particularly those who are contracted to personally perform work.

Failure to comply with the provisions of the Act can result in claims being brought before an Employment Tribunal. If a discrimination claim is successful, the compensation awarded is uncapped, meaning there is no upper limit. Awards typically include compensation for financial loss and injury to feelings.

## Definition of a Disability

The Act defines disability as “a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities.” When defining whether someone is covered by the Act, substantial means something which is more than minor or trivial; and long-term adverse effect means that it is likely to last for at least a year or for the rest of the person’s life. Occupational Health will offer a medical view on whether an employee is covered by The Act, however this is ultimately a legal decision.

The definition of disability does not only refer to people who may be visibly disabled, for example a person who has a visual impairment a person who uses a wheelchair. It can also cover non-visible disabilities such as mental health issues, heart conditions, learning disabilities and diabetes.

Individuals with cancer, multiple sclerosis or HIV/AIDS are covered by the Act from diagnosis even if they do not experience symptoms of their condition.

Individuals with a terminal illness are also covered by the Act. If an employee with a terminal illness wishes to continue working, the manager will consider whether their G.P/ Consultant has requested any supportive measures to be put in place. This will be specified on the statement of fitness for work (fit note). If the employee does not produce a fit note which contains this information, the manager will refer the employee to Occupational Health for advice on reasonable adjustments that will assist them at work.

## Preventing Discrimination

To prevent discrimination, it is important that managers follow HR policies, procedures and guidelines when managing sickness absence. If an employee has a disability, then it will be essential for managers to consider whether it is necessary to make any reasonable adjustments to support them at work as outlined further on in this guidance.

Employers have a legal obligation to provide reasonable adjustments when they know, or could reasonably be expected to know, that an individual is disabled.

An example of reasonably being expected to know could be when an employee begins to struggle with manual tasks due to ongoing breathing difficulties, particularly if these difficulties persist for 12 months or more. In such cases, it is appropriate and expected for the manager to investigate the situation to determine whether reasonable adjustments are required.

## Sickness Absence

Managers must ensure all sickness absence is recorded on iTrent and managed fairly under the Supporting Attendance Policy. There are a number of support options that are available to managers to guide them when managing these absences.

It is important to note that an employee with a disability knows their disability better than anyone else and must therefore be involved in discussions regarding what reasonable adjustments can be made to support them back into work or to remain in work and to minimise any absences.

Frequent recurring absences may occur due to their disability, so different options should be considered to both accommodate this and lower the number of absences where possible. This could include exploring flexible working arrangements or an assessment/exploration of transformation of duties to further support the employee achieving a return to work or to minimise any absences.

It is important to be guided by medical advice when managing absence for an employee with a disability, and advice should be sought from Occupational Health where appropriate. In order to support the employee back into work and where appropriate, Occupational Health should be utilised in order to understand whether the employee is suitable for temporary or permanent medical redeployment and what reasonable adjustments can be considered.

Where sickness absence occurs due to a disability, discretion should be applied when supporting the employee through the Supporting Attendance procedure. Examples of this could include extending review periods during any period of absence or form of recovery. However, Occupational Health advice will be able to provide further support and guidance in respect of potential adjustments which may be explored.

A stress or generic risk assessment should be completed in order to ensure all relevant reasonable adjustments have been explored and to identify any risks which could be considered as a barrier for an employee achieving a return to work.

When completing the risk assessment, the employee should also be present in order to provide input on what they deem a risk to them and advise what they are able to do. Any risk assessment should be reviewed at regular points following completion (such as every three months), and if necessary, should be completed in conjunction with a member of Wigan

Council's HR Operations team. Where the employee's role involves more physical duties, a risk assessment should be completed as soon as possible.

Consideration should be given to utilising disability leave in order to complete rehabilitation activities, for example sign language training or physiotherapy, as this may aid a return to work.

Where necessary, specialist office equipment may be required to be purchased in order to support the employee's return to work, for example, a new chair, standing desk, or anti-glare equipment for a laptop. Also, certain tasks could be reallocated on a temporary basis, and a phased return may be considered to ensure that a return to work is successful.

Finally, a referral to Access to Work may be considered to further identify avenues of support for the employee. Further information on a referral to Access to Work can be found on the Supporting Attendance pages on the Hub.



**Wigan**  
**Council**

# Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Supporting Team Wigan Guidance

## What is ADHD?

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental condition affecting the brain structure and the way in which messages are communicated around the brain and different areas of the brain are activated.

## Strengths

Many people with ADHD are noted for strengths such as:

- Inventiveness.
- Adaptability.
- Curiosity.
- People skills.
- Training delivery.
- Practicality.
- Good IT skills.
- Strong visualisation, imagination, and artistic skills.
- Determination and persistence
- Motivation and ambition.

## How can ADHD affect people in the workplace?

People with ADHD can struggle with:

- Organisation and time management.

- Following instructions.
- Focusing and completing tasks.
- Coping with stress.
- Carelessness and lack of attention to detail.

## Reasonable adjustments

There are lots of things you can do to help give somebody with ADHD a positive experience. The following adjustments are ideas and should be personalised and built on through discussion. These suggestions have been made to help support your team member to access, engage and feel comfortable in employment.

- Visual prompts e.g. wall charts for routines, checklists, post it notes for reminders.
- Physical reminders e.g. laying out everything needed for tomorrow at the end of today, labelled 'homes' for storing tools.
- Larger computer screens so everything is visible to reduce the burden on memory.
- Visible clocks, allowing / encouraging use of alarms and timers.
- Reduce distractions:
  - Allow headphones with music, ambient noise, or ear plugs.
  - Own space, if possible, with reduced level of distraction.
- Offer increased supervision / frequent check-ins and feedback, e.g. daily or weekly planning and progress meetings.
- Tasks broken down into clear, bite size steps.
- Clear deadlines.

- Give instructions and meeting notes in writing rather than verbally.
- Operate a buddy system for tasks to help maintain focus.
- Allow regular breaks, for example:
  - Pomodoro working (25 mins work + 5 mins break, with longer break after 4 Pomodoro's)
  - Scheduled breaks during long meetings / activities.

## Tips

Other tips for supporting your team member include:

- Be consistent. Do what you promise and follow a structured routine.
- Hone your communication style. Be clear in your communication, and ask what form or method is preferred. Some individuals may prefer written notes rather than verbal instructions.
- Stay in regular contact. Book in and maintain regular one-to-one meetings with agendas that have been prepared and delivered in advance.
- Allow for extra time. Offer breaks during lengthy meetings or activities and divide tasks into smaller subtasks.
- Provide boundaries. Be clear about the unwritten rules of the workplace. Ask if everything is clear and that these boundaries are understood. Do not assume.

## Further Information

Examples of where you can find more information include:

### External support

[ADHD Foundation](#)

[An Employer's Guide to ADHD in the Workplace - Scottish ADHD Coalition](#)

[ADHD and Work | Welfare Pack to help ADHD in the workplace \(adhd.uk.co.uk\)](#)

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/>

## **Internal support**

We believe that the health and wellbeing of all staff is paramount. To find out more about what support we have in place visit our [Staff Wellbeing](#) page.



**Wigan**   
**Council**

# Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)

Supporting Team Wigan Guidance

# What is Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)?

Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) is a neurodivergence that affects an individual's social interaction, communication, and behaviour. It is a spectrum condition because it affects individuals in different ways and to varying degrees. They include a wide range of symptoms and different levels of ability. People who have previously been diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome or with autism all fall under what we now call ASC. ASC is a developmental difference – it is something you tend to be born with rather than being caused by head injury or stroke or other neurological condition. Autistic people may not receive an official diagnosis until adulthood.

## Strengths

Many people with Autism are noted for strengths such as:

- A natural ability to recognise patterns or trends within data sets very quickly.
- High attention to detail and excellent problem-solving skills.
- Excellent memory for facts or dates.
- High retention and loyalty.
- Good logical, methodical, and analytical abilities.
- Highly committed and honest.
- Low absence rate and high reliability levels.
- Creative ways of thinking.
- A tendency towards perfectionism and an interest in doing things correctly.
- High levels of education.

- Focus on precision and accuracy in areas of interest.
- Ability to focus intensely on a particular topic or task, known as hyperfocus

## How can ASC affect people in the workplace?

- Individuals may have difficulties with social communication and social interactions. They may find it hard to join in conversations, build relationships or have difficulty interpreting the behaviour and intentions of other people.
- Individuals of different genders may present ASC in dissimilar ways. For instance, some females may have friendships, but they may prefer a one-to-one friendship or to be on the edges of groups or teams. The National Autistic Society also suggests that females may be more likely to mask autistic traits.
- Individuals may demonstrate repetitive behaviour. This could come across through repetitive body movements.
- Finding changes to routines difficult.
- They may respond to the environment. If a situation raises their anxiety, they might be more affected by their ASC.

## Reasonable adjustments

There are lots of things you can do to help give somebody with ASC a positive experience. The following adjustments are ideas and should be personalised and built on through discussion. These suggestions have been made to help support your team member to access, engage and feel comfortable in employment. Examples include:

- Flexible work hours or schedule.
- Clear and specific job expectations.

- Sensory-friendly work environments.
- Communication support, such as written instructions or visual aids.
- Advance notice and explanation of changes.

## Further Information

Examples of where you can find more information include:

### External support

[What is autism](#)

[What is autism? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Autism Spectrum Condition | ASC | Lexxic](#)

### Internal support

We believe that the health and wellbeing of all staff is paramount. To find out more about what support we have in place visit our [Staff Wellbeing](#) page.



**Wigan**   
**Council**

# Dyscalculia

Supporting Team Wigan Guidance

## What is dyscalculia?

Dyscalculia affects an individual's ability to acquire and use mathematical skills. For some people, it affects how they see numbers. For others, it might make symbols difficult to read, or they may have trouble understanding finances and using numbers in everyday life.

## Strengths

People with Dyscalculia are often practical, intuitive, and have a love of words. Many bring outstanding creativity and strong strategic or lateral thinking skills to the workplace. These talents can be applied to trouble shooting situations with excellent results.

Many people with dyscalculia are noted for additional strengths such as:

- Storytelling.
- Thinking visually, futuristically, or in other diverse or innovative ways (like 3D)
- Simplifying processes.
- Making verbal presentations.

## How can Dyscalculia affect people in the workplace?

It might be difficult for someone with dyscalculia to understand and work with numbers, perform calculations, and remember facts in mathematics.

## Reasonable adjustments

There are lots of things you can do to help give somebody with Dyscalculia a positive experience. The following adjustments are ideas and should be personalised and built on through discussion. These suggestions have been made to help support your team member to access, engage and feel comfortable in employment. Examples include:

- Technical adjustments (mobile phones with virtual assistants, calculators, calendars, reminders, alarms, noise reduction headphones;

screen readers, dictation software, adjustable computer monitors, multiple monitors).

- Premeasurement guides (for scenarios where operating machinery or equipment is required).
- Fixed desks or quiet spaces.

## Further Information

Examples of where you can find more information include:

### External support

- [Dyslexia-Dyspraxia-Dyscalculia-and-Dysgraphia-Line-Manager-Toolkit.pdf \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)
- [What is dyscalculia? | Dyslexia with Numbers \(nationalnumeracy.org.uk\)](#)
- [Dyscalculia toolkit | Weston College](#)

### Internal support

We believe that the health and wellbeing of all staff is paramount. To find out more about what support we have in place visit our [Staff Wellbeing](#) page.



**Wigan**   
**Council**

# Dysgraphia

Supporting Team Wigan Guidance

## Introduction – What is Dysgraphia?

Dysgraphia is a condition that affects the ability to recognise written words, and the relationship between letter forms and the sounds they make.

Dysgraphia can also have an impact on memory processing. It is sometimes referred to as a learning difference (or difficulty) rather than a learning disability.

## Strengths

Many people with Dysgraphia are noted for strengths such as:

- Listening.
- Memorising (and recalling) details.
- Telling stories (and verbally expressing themselves).
- Socialising.
- Problem solving.

## How can Dysgraphia affect people in the workplace?

- When using spell-check on a computer, often has difficulty picking out the correct word from a list of similar words.
- Trouble filling in routine forms by hand, particularly if they require fitting words into set boxes.
- Often leaves out individual letters or the ends of words (or entire words), particularly when writing quickly.
- In some cases, they may have trouble with typing.
- Experiences hand cramps or pain when writing.
- Has trouble telling when words are misspelled.
- Often uses grammatically incorrect sentences in e-mails or reports.

- May be overly reliant on simple sentence structures.
- Prefers to give or get directions orally instead of in writing.
- Has trouble “getting to the point” in written communication; e-mails may be rambling, or reports may repeat the same ideas several times.
- Able to explain self clearly when speaking, but not when writing.

## Reasonable adjustments

There are lots of things you can do to help give somebody with Dysgraphia a positive experience. The following adjustments are ideas and should be personalised and built on through discussion. These suggestions have been made to help support your team member to access, engage and feel comfortable in employment. Examples include:

- Show flexibility towards the employee. Give individuals more time to complete written projects and allow them to take notes electronically (either by typing or recording) during meetings.
- Be mindful of wellbeing. There may be certain activities (such as group projects where written communication is involved) that increase anxiety for individuals with dysgraphia. This might prompt them to avoid tasks instead of seeking to gain new skills. Discuss measures that would help them build the confidence to participate in a manner that is comfortable and supportive.
- Technical adjustments (voice-to-text dictation software; writing implements that are larger or specifically designed in other ways to support dexterity requirements).
- Alternatives to handwritten communication when sharing or showcasing work (such as oral or recorded presentations).
- Ergonomic workstations with easy-to-navigate spaces.
- Suitable signage for those who may require additional assistance due to spatial awareness requirements.
- Additional spelling and grammar checking tools.

- Electronic organisational tools (for taking notes, organising reference material, keeping track of appointments).
- Provide quiet workspace options. Recognise that individuals with dysgraphia may benefit from quiet and focused work environments. Designate quiet areas within the office where employees can retreat to when they need to concentrate on tasks without the distractions of a bustling workplace.

## Further Information

Examples of where you can find more information include:

### External support

- [Dysgraphia in Adults: Recognizing Symptoms Later in Life \(additudemag.com\)](https://www.additudemag.com/dysgraphia-in-adults-recognizing-symptoms-later-in-life/)
- [Dyslexia-Dyspraxia-Dyscalculia-and-Dysgraphia-Line-Manager-Toolkit.pdf \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://www.blog.gov.uk/2018/06/dyslexia-dyspraxia-dyscalculia-and-dysgraphia-line-manager-toolkit.pdf)
- [The Link Between Dysgraphia and Other Learning Difficulties — Leaf Complex Care \(leafcare.co.uk\)](https://leafcare.co.uk/the-link-between-dysgraphia-and-other-learning-difficulties/)

### Internal support

We believe that the health and wellbeing of all staff is paramount. To find out more about what support we have in place visit our [Staff Wellbeing](#) page.



**Wigan**   
**Council**

# Dyslexia

Supporting Team Wigan Guidance

## What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty, which means it causes problems with certain abilities used for learning such as reading, writing, and spelling.

There is more than one type of dyslexia, and it can be diagnosed at any stage of a person's life. Dyslexia varies from person to person, and no two people have the same set of strengths and challenges. Not everyone with dyslexia will exhibit identifiable characteristics, and a proper diagnosis should involve a thorough evaluation by a qualified healthcare professional.

## Strengths

People with Dyslexia are very empathetic and have goods skills in other areas. For example, they are:

- Good problem solvers.
- Creative and innovative.
- Observant and excellent big-picture thinkers.
- Good at making connections and relationship building.
- Strong at narrative reasoning.
- Good at three-dimensional and strategic thinking and planning.

## How can Dyslexia affect people in the workplace?

Examples of where people with dyslexia may find challenges include:

- Performing tasks involving working memory such as creating reports or writing letters.

- Undertaking literacy-based tasks, especially when required to do these at speed.
- Finding mistakes in their own or others' work.
- Meeting deadlines and organising workload.

## Reasonable adjustments

There are lots of things you can do to help give somebody with Dyslexia a positive experience. The following adjustments are ideas and should be personalised and built on through discussion. These suggestions have been made to help support your team member to access, engage and feel comfortable in employment. Examples include:

- Show flexibility towards the person. Give them more time to get used to their job role and become proficient in their work-related tasks.
- Allow extra time for travel to work. Find out if there may be issues for the person to travel independently, especially when public transport may be limited or unreliable.
- Communicate clearly. Use simple language in all communications and avoid jargon.
- Simplify processes make sure instructions have been understood and that tasks are clear.
- Provide boundaries. Be clear about appropriate work-related behaviours, expectations, customs, and unwritten rules.
- A mentor or a trainer.
- Technical adjustments such as speech recognition software, digital recorders, reading pens, screen readers.
- Accessible formats for training materials for example, different coloured paper, typeface modifications, audio options.
- Electronic organisational tools.

- Verbal guidance or instructions rather than written instructions, if preferred.

## Further Information

Examples of where you can find more information include:

### External support

- [Adult Checklist \(bdadyslexia.org.uk\)](https://bdadyslexia.org.uk)
- [Signs of dyslexia \(adult\) - British Dyslexia Association \(bdadyslexia.org.uk\)](https://bdadyslexia.org.uk)
- [What is dyslexia? - British Dyslexia Association \(bdadyslexia.org.uk\)](https://bdadyslexia.org.uk)
- [Dyslexia - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

### Internal support

We believe that the health and wellbeing of all staff is paramount. To find out more about what support we have in place visit our [Staff Wellbeing](#) page.



**Wigan**   
**Council**

# Dyspraxia

Supporting Team Wigan Guidance

## What is Dyspraxia?

Dyspraxia is also known as development co-ordination disorder (DCD). There is one type of Dyspraxia associated with motor skills which can affect the person's writing or their ability to use small objects. It can affect co-ordination skills such as tasks requiring balance, playing sports or learning to drive a car.

There is also another type known as Verbal Dyspraxia which is associated with producing sounds and forming words. A person with Verbal Dyspraxia has difficulty placing muscles in the correct position to produce speech. This can result in pauses when answering questions or responding to comments.

Dyspraxia varies from person to person, and no two people have the same set of strengths and challenges. Not everyone with Dyspraxia will exhibit identifiable characteristics and this condition, does not affect a person's intelligence.

## Strengths

People with Dyspraxia are noted for many strengths. For example, they are:

- Verbally adept.
- Advanced in their reading skills.
- Creative and imaginative; good at photography, lyrical writing, poetry.
- Sensitive to the needs of others and have empathy towards others.
- Strong with verbal communication skills.
- Persistent and determined.
- Extremely hard working.

# How can Dyspraxia affect people in the workplace?

People with Dyspraxia can struggle with:

- Learning new tasks or transferring actions from existing tasks to new skills.
- Using tools and equipment associated with fine or gross motor control and spatial awareness. For instance, they may find tasks such as controlling a mouse difficult, despite frequent exposure.
- Executing complex sequential activities like packing boxes or following instructions.
- Organising and undertaking tasks involving working memory and handwriting (which may be unclear and untidy).
- Relying on short term memory in ways that affect their planning and organisational skills.

## Reasonable adjustments

There are lots of things you can do to help give somebody with Dyspraxia a positive experience. The following adjustments are ideas and should be personalised and built on through discussion. These suggestions have been made to help support your team member to access, engage and feel comfortable in employment. These include:

- Technical adjustments for example, noise reduction headphones, screen readers, dictation software; multiple monitors, computer adjustments or special grips to support dexterity requirement.
- Alternatives to handwritten communication.
- Additional spelling and grammar checking tools.
- Electronic organisational tools which can be used for taking notes, organising reference material, keeping track of appointments.
- Designated quiet spaces or dedicated workstations.

- Simplify processes or activities that might be difficult to learn. Try to adapt the task so it can be broken down into separate, smaller steps.

## Tips

Other tips for supporting your team member include:

- Support regular exercise routines. People with Dyspraxia can sometimes benefit from physical fitness programmes that have been tailored to their needs and can improve their strength and coordination.
- Encourage mind mapping. This can help with setting priorities and meeting deadlines.

## Further Information

Examples of where you can find more information include:

### External support

- [Dyspraxia \(DCD\) - British Dyslexia Association \(bdadyslexia.org.uk\)](https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)
- [Dyspraxia in adults - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dyspraxia-in-adults/)

### Internal support

We believe that the health and wellbeing of all staff is paramount. To find out more about what support we have in place visit our [Staff Wellbeing](#) page.



**Wigan**   
**Council**

# Hearing Loss and Deafness

Supporting Team Wigan Guidance

# What is Hearing Loss and Deafness?

Specialists categorise hearing loss using four different levels:

- **Mild hearing loss** which can make it difficult to follow speech, particularly in noisy situations or for long periods. They may or may not use hearing aids.
- **Moderate hearing loss** which can cause people to mishear words and struggle to hear when there is background noise or when they are in group conversations. They will likely use hearing aids.
- **Severe hearing loss** can make it difficult for someone to hear speech in most situations, even with a hearing aid. They are more likely to lipread and use assistive technology to help them communicate with colleagues.
- **Profound deafness** means it's likely that hearing aids won't capture comprehensible speech, but they may help show where sounds originate. Some people who are profoundly deaf communicate through speech and lipreading, while others use sign language.

According to [government guidance on the Equality Act 2010](#), if a person uses a hearing aid, it is the impact of their hearing loss on their ability to communicate without the hearing aid that is considered when assessing the level of disability.

## Strengths

Many people with hearing loss or deafness are noted for strengths such as they are:

- Adaptable: they overcome obstacles in every aspect of their daily lives meaning they have the ability to tackle challenges or work assignments differently to their hearing colleagues.
- Very detail-orientated and prone to taking good notes.  
Able to communicate well via email and written correspondence.

- They offer a unique perspective based on their life experiences which can contribute positively to a specific project and help improve services to become more inclusive for all consumers.

## How can hearing loss and deafness affect people in the workplace?

An absence of understanding about hearing loss, combined with a lack of support, can lead to talented individuals missing out on job opportunities and reaching their full potential as they may feel isolated at work.

It can make it difficult for them to participate in team meetings and makes them feel excluded from conversations with colleagues.

## Reasonable adjustments

### Acoustics and sound

- Using soft furnishings such as carpets.
- Fitting rubber caps on chair and table leg.
- Adjusting the layout of a room and using good lighting to help the person see everybody clearly - this is important for lipreading.
- Turning down (or turn off) music in the workplace.

### Assistive technology

- Installing equipment such as amplified telephones and flashing-light fire alarms.
- Installing a hearing loop system in meeting rooms or providing a portable hearing loop, or other listening device, to use during away from the office.
- Providing electronic note takers or a Roger Pen.

## Health and Safety

Wigan Council has a legal obligation to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all its employees under the [Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974](#). While this does not provide employers with specific requirements for people with hearing loss, the council has a duty (under the equality and discrimination laws in the UK) to make sure employees with hearing impairments are supported. Examples of this include:

- Ensuring fire and emergency wardens are made aware of employees who have hearing loss to ensure they're able to communicate effectively in an emergency.
- Ensuring emergency evacuation plans are always available in an accessible format.
- Ensuring health and safety training is accessible to all staff and where applicable, providing communication support, such as interpreters, lip speakers, or speech-to-text reporters or when using videos, making sure they have subtitles.
- Providing hearing protection for people who routinely work in a noisy environment.
- Absence reporting stating that texting or emailing is acceptable so that people with hearing loss can easily inform their manager when they can't come to work.

## Further Information

Examples of where you can find more information include:

### External support

- [Home - British Deaf Association \(bda.org.uk\)](#)
- [Home Page - Royal Association for Deaf people \(royaldeaf.org.uk\)](#)
- [Workplace adjustments for deaf people and people with hearing loss - RNID](#)
- [NHS England Employment 'What Works' Guide](#)

## Internal support

We believe that the health and wellbeing of all staff is paramount. To find out more about what support we have in place visit our [Staff Wellbeing](#) page.



**Wigan**   
**Council**

# Sight Loss

Supporting Team Wigan Guidance

## What is Sight Loss?

The term sight loss refers to blind, blindness, partially sighted, visually impaired, or visual impairment. Some people are born blind or with a visual impairment. Others experience sight loss because of an accident or a medical condition.

Some forms of sight loss are progressive but early diagnosis and intervention can help treat some conditions that may otherwise result in deteriorating sight. The treatment will depend on the condition, but could include wearing prescription glasses or contact lenses, medication, or surgery.

## Strengths

Many people with sight loss are noted for strengths such as:

- Listening and absorbing information audibly.
- Memorising information.
- Being an advocate for themselves; having good communication skills and whilst being assertive are diplomatic.
- Being resilient and determined.
- Being adaptable and creative using different methods of approach when facing situations and tasks.

## How can sight loss affect people in the workplace?

Sight loss can affect individuals in the workplace in different ways. For example, they may find it challenging to:

- Read or create some types of documents. People who rely on screen readers may find it difficult to access information that is presented in tables or contains diagrams and pictures.

- Use some devices or software.
- Physically navigate their way around the workplace.
- Identify some people or pick up on non-verbal cues and body language.
- Fully participate in certain interactions where they cannot access the full information or functionality (for instance, text or visuals presented in slides or the chat in virtual meetings).

## Reasonable adjustments

There are lots of things you can do to help give somebody with sight loss a positive experience. The following adjustments are ideas and should be personalised and built on through discussion. These suggestions have been made to help support your team member to access, engage and feel comfortable in employment.

- Providing assistive technology (such as speech recognition software).
- Supplying specialist or alternative equipment (like larger screens or magnifiers).
- Improving the accessibility of digital content and processes (including compliance with [Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\)](#) standards).
- Considering if there are different ways, such as incorporating different forms of automation, to tackle key tasks.
- Amending the job description to focus on the individual's strengths and reallocating ad hoc or minor tasks that may cause difficulties because of the person's disability; subject to job evaluation.
- Reconfiguring the workspace or providing a fixed workspace (rather than a hot desk) to improve accessibility and navigation for the person to make their way around the office.
- Changing the way meetings and training sessions are run to ensure everyone can contribute. For example:
  - Moving away from using visual cues to call on individuals who wish to participate.

- Delivering training in different ways, producing materials in different formats, or providing any handouts or other support materials in advance by e-mail, so these can be accessed digitally.
- Improving document accessibility (this could mean phasing out all forms of handwritten communication).
- Ensuring social activities are accessible.
- Providing facilities for guide dogs.

## Further Information

Examples of where you can find more information include:

### External support

- [Support for people with sight loss to stay in work | RNIB | RNIB](#)
- [Guidance on supporting colleagues with Visual Impairments - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Working with blind and partially sighted colleagues – An employer and staff guide \(rnib.org.uk\)](#)

### Internal support

We believe that the health and wellbeing of all staff is paramount. To find out more about what support we have in place visit our [Staff Wellbeing](#) page.



**Wigan**   
**Council**

# Stammering

Supporting Team Wigan Guidance

## What is Stammering?

Stammering (also known as stuttering), is when someone:

- Repeats sounds or words. For example, “My name is J-J-J-J-John”.
- Stretches or prolongs sounds. For example, “Can you read me a sssssstory?”.
- Has a silent block where a sound gets stuck. A block could last for a few seconds, or it could last longer. For example, “-----Can I have...”.

If someone is finding it hard to get sounds out, they might also:

- Appear tense in their mouth, face, or body.
- Have their breathing restricted.
- Close their eyes or look away.
- Use other parts of their body to help get a word out or release tension.

Everyone's stammer is unique, and everyone stammers differently. It's normal for stammering to fluctuate. People can stammer less on some days or in certain situations, and more in others. An increase in stammering may be linked to tiredness, stress, speaking to someone in authority, using the phone or speaking in front of a group. Sometimes there's no reason to explain the variability.

## Strengths

Many people with a stammer are noted for strengths such as:

- Creative use of words and language.
- Empathy and compassion for others.
- Interest in the thoughts and experiences of others.
- Resilience.

# How can stammering affect people in the workplace?

The following workplace situations can be more challenging for people who stammer:

- Making introductions or speaking first.
- Contributing to meetings.
- Video calls. The time lags, the buffering, not knowing when others are going to speak and then speaking at the same time and seeing themselves stammer on screen, can be a challenge.
- Phone calls. Using the phone can be hard because of the lack of visual cues. Making or answering a call can be particularly difficult in open plan offices where other people are listening in. Reading from a script or having a set way of answering can also be challenging as they can't find alternative words that are easier to say.
- Intercoms, radios and tannoy. Having to speak aloud, read from a script or speak to someone without visual cues can be hard.
- Presenting.

## Reasonable adjustments

There are lots of things you can do to help give somebody with a stammer a positive experience. The following adjustments are ideas and should be personalised and built on through discussion. These suggestions have been made to help support your team member to access, engage and feel comfortable in employment.

## Making introductions

For those who find saying their name or speaking first is a barrier, some adjustments to consider:

- Someone else makes all the introductions.

- Agree in advance when the person's turn will be when group introductions are being made.
- Use name badges rather than spoken introductions for in-person meetings.
- Use on-screen names rather than spoken introductions during video calls.
- During video calls, use a screen background that includes the person's name and lets others know that they stammer.
- When working on the telephone, use a pre-recorded greetings and introductions.

## Using the phone

For those who find speaking more difficult or feel self-conscious being overheard by colleagues when using the phone, some adjustments to consider:

- Offer access to a quieter or more private space to make phone calls.
- Remove demands to stick to a fixed script when making or answering calls.
- When working on the telephone, use a pre-recorded greeting and introduction.
- Provide flexible options to meet face-to-face, by video call, or through e-mails as alternatives to using the phone.

## Using intercoms and radios

For those who find it more challenging to speak on an intercom or radio, some adjustments to consider:

- Use of specific call signs on group radio channels to indicate that someone may need more time to talk.

- Offer the flexibility to opt out of using intercoms or radios.
- Provide alternative options for accessing a building.

## Contributing to meetings

For those who find speaking in fast-paced meetings challenging, some adjustments to consider:

- Stammered speech to be welcomed and respected within meetings.
- Agenda to be sent out well in advance and meeting organisers made aware of the topics the person would like to speak on.
- Turn-taking within meetings handled fairly to ensure that space is made for everyone.
- Option offered to the person who stammers to go first when making introductions.
- Meeting participants to use a visual signal (like the raised hand feature on many virtual meeting platforms) to indicate when they wish to speak rather than just jumping in.
- Visual and written materials welcomed and given equal weighting with spoken contributions.
- The option to use the chat function (either to support or instead of speech) to be given equal weighting with spoken contributions.
- The option to contribute in writing before or after meetings.
- During video calls, use a screen background that includes the person's name and lets others know that they stammer.
- Use the built-in tech tools so the person does not have to see their own picture/video stream during the meeting.

# Presenting

For those who feel anxious about presenting, some adjustments to consider:

- Stammered speech to be welcomed and respected within presentations.
- Flexibility around the method of presenting, for example:
  - Present with a colleague or in a group.
  - Use visual/written resources as well as speaking.
  - Use a pre-recorded video presentation.

## Further Information

Examples of where you can find more information include:

### External support

Some people seek support for their stammer, such as speech and language therapy, while others don't see it as an issue at all.

If they *do* want support or you'd like to support a friend or colleague, you find [help with Stamma](#), the national stammering charity which has a dedicated [employment service](#) for organisations and individuals on issues related to stammering at work.

For general support, you can [start a webchat](#) or call their helpline for free on 0808 802 002.

### Internal support

We believe that the health and wellbeing of all staff is paramount. To find out more about what support we have in place visit our [Staff Wellbeing](#) page.





**Wigan**   
**Council**

# Tourette's Syndrome

Supporting Team Wigan Guidance

## What is Tourette Syndrome?

Tourette's Syndrome is a condition that causes a person to make involuntary sounds and movements called tics. It usually starts during childhood, but the tics and other symptoms usually improve after several years and sometimes go away completely. There is no cure, but treatment can help manage symptoms.

People with Tourette's Syndrome may also have obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), depression or anxiety or learning difficulties.

## Strengths

People with Tourette's Syndrome are noted for many strengths, such as:

- Excellent written communication and verbal grammar skills.
- Enhanced cognitive control.
- Acute perception.
- Creativity and imagination.
- Ability to hyper focus (become completely absorbed in a task).

## How can Tourette's Syndrome affect people in the workplace?

Examples of where people with Tourette's Syndrome may find challenges include:

- Sensory difficulties which may overwhelm them.
- Stress and anxiety that could make tics worse.
- Difficulties processing auditory (spoken) information.
- Reduced concentration if attempting to suppress tics.

People with Tourette's Syndrome may experience co-occurring conditions such as ADHD or OCD which may affect organisational skills, time management and decision-making abilities.

## Reasonable adjustments

There are lots of things you can do to help give somebody with ASC a positive experience. The following adjustments are ideas and should be personalised and built on through discussion. These suggestions have been made to help support your team member to access, engage and feel comfortable in employment. Examples include:

- Arrange organisation and memory tools to help with workflow management.
- Install sensory adjustments for controlling lights, smells, sounds to minimise distractions.
- Have quiet desks away from others so the person won't feel their tics are disturbing other colleagues.

## Tips

Other tips for supporting your team member to help them manage their stress and/anxiety and reduce subsequent tics include:

- Allowing them to take regular breaks to help them manage their stress.
- Minimising their exposure to triggers and distractions.
- Assigning tasks that align with their strengths and talents.
- Including them in the planning process if there is going to be a change to the environment or working hours.
- Letting them wear headphones to reduce noise.
- Assigning a mentor or workplace buddy.

## Further Information

Examples of where you can find more information include:

### External support

- [Tourette's syndrome - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tourette-s-syndrome/)
- [Tourettes Action eLearning Module \(tourettes-action.org.uk\)](https://www.tourettes-action.org.uk/elearning-module)
- [TS & Employers \(tourettes-action.org.uk\)](https://www.tourettes-action.org.uk/employers)

### Internal support

We believe that the health and wellbeing of all staff is paramount. To find out more about what support we have in place visit our [Staff Wellbeing](#) page.